

## Message Text

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46

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 INR-07 IO-13 MED-03 NSAE-00 PA-02

DHA-02 SCA-01 OES-06 USIA-15 PRS-01 CIAE-00 HEW-06

AID-05 FDRE-00 DODE-00 OC-06 CCO-00 SCSE-00 PPTE-00

PER-03 EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 FEAE-00 INT-05 PM-04

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FM AMCONSUL THESSALONIKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2640

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

UNCLAS THESSALONIKI 0263

E.O.11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PROP, SWEL, EGEN, GR, TU

SUBJECT: NOTE REGARDING RUMORS OF CHOLERA IN TURKEY

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT AS RECEIVED IN ENGLISH OF  
NOTE DATED AUGUST 18 RECEIVED BY CONGEN AUGUST 20  
FROM TURKISH CONGEN HERE. I FIND IT AN INTERESTING  
EXAMPLE OF THE KIND OF BY-PLAY AND BUSH-LEAGUE  
PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE THAT GOES ALONG WITH THE LARGER  
ISSUES PRESENTLY DIVIDING THE TWO COUNTRIES.

2. BEGIN TEXT: THE CONSULATE GENERAL OF TURKEY  
PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO THE AMERICAN CONSULATE  
GENERAL AND HAS THE HONOR TO ENLIGHTEN CERTAIN FACTS  
PERTAINING TO RUMORS IN THESSALONIKI.

3. IT HAS BEEN OBSERVED THAT GREEK MASS MEDIA  
EMPHASIZED THAT THERE IS A PLAGUE OF CHOLERA IN TURKEY  
AND LIKEWISE TURKISH CONSULATE GENERAL' S ATTENTION  
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HAS BEEN DRAWN ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS TO THE RUMORS TO

THAT EFFECT SPREADING IN THESSALONIKI.

4. IN THIS CONNECTION, IN A CIRCULAR RECEIVED FROM THE TURKISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, IT IS BEING DEFINITELY STATED THAT, LETTING ASIDE THE FACT THAT THERE IS NO SUCH PLAGUE IN TURKEY AND INCOMING TOURISTS ARE NOT EVEN REQUIRED OF BEING VACCINATED AGAINST THIS DISEASE, NOT EVEN A SINGLE CASE OF CHOLERA HAD BEEN OBSERVED IN TURKEY. IT HAS BEEN CONCLUDED WITHOUT DOUBT, THAT THE MOTIVE BEHIND THIS BASELESS AND DESIGNFUL RUMOR IS TO DISCREDIT TURKEY AND TO STALL THE PASSAGE OF TOURISTS TO OUR COUNTRY. WHEN CONFRONTED WITH SUCH RUMORS, IT IS ONLY LOGICAL THAT INQUIRIES BE MADE TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT OF ITS TRUTH AND THE TURKISH CONSULATE GENERAL WILL ONLY BE WILLING TO ASSIST SUCH INQUIRIES.

5. COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE. END TEXT.

6. PARALLELING TURKISH CONCERN AS EXPRESSED IN ABOVE NOTE IS LOCAL GREEK PREOCCUPATION WITH EFFECT OF SISMIC CRISIS ON TOURISM IN NORTHERN GREECE. ALTHOUGH NO HARD FACTS YET AVAILABLE FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT, A LEADING HOTELIER IN THESSALONIKI TOLD ME THE OTHER DAY THAT HIS HOTEL WAS RUNNING AS ABOUT SIXTY PERCENT OCCUPANCY WHEREAS IT USUALLY RUNS AT ABOUT NINETY PERCENT AT THIS TIME OF YEAR. HE ADDED THAT ONE OF HIS MAJOR COMPETITORS IS RUNNING AT OCCUPANCY RATE OF WELL UNDER FIFTY PERCENT. FINALLY, I WAS TOLD OVER WEEKEND OF AUGUST 21/22 AT MAJOR TOURIST RESORT ON ISLAND OF THASSOS THAT THERE HAD BEEN MASSIVE CANCELLATIONS BY PROSPECTIVE FOREIGN CLIENTS AND THAT OVER TWO-WEEK PERIOD RESERVATIONS HAD FALLEN FROM A LEVEL OF ROUGHLY TWENTY-FIVE PERCENT OVER-BOOKINGS DOWN TO A LEVEL OF ROUGHLY FIFTY PERCENT OCCUPANCY.

7. THUS IT APPEARS THAT SISMIC FUSS IS HAVING ITS IMPACT ON TOURISM IN NORTHERN GREECE AT LEAST, WITH ATTENDANT IMPLICATIONS FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNINGS  
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SO VITAL TO GREECE'S ECONOMY. AS ONE GREEK IN THE BUSINESS COMMENTED TO ME, " I DONT KNOW WHETHER THE TURKS WANT OUR OIL OR OUR ISLANDS BUT THEY SURE MAKE A DETERMINED EFFORT TO SABOTAGE OUR TOURISM EVERY SUMMER".  
NEGROPONTE

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